

Series I
Correspondence,
1932-1973

Box 1, Folder 19

October 11, 1944
- April 26, 1945

Frame: 0621

Keep all of this file--Bates Outgoing
1944-1945

0623

COMMANDER CRUISER DIVISION FOUR
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

11 October 1944.

Dear Rice:

A young friend of mine, Ensign George Wolfe, U.S.N.R., attached to the U.S.S. MINNEAPOLIS, desires flight training. He has brought two letters to me signed by you, which were, evidently, both replies to the same letter. These replies of yours were:

BuPers 267828

Pers 3161-VP-4 of May 31, 1944.

BuPers 267828

Pers 3161-BP of August 17, 1944.

I forwarded Ensign Wolfe's original request as Commanding Officer of the MINNEAPOLIS, and have been interested in his success. He is a tall nice looking young fellow, somewhat restless because he wants more to do than he feels he is doing, is capable, especially in things he likes to do, gets on well with the men, is of an excellent family background, and has had excellent University training (University of California).

He has been at sea for 14 months and has served as a Battery Officer (20 MM) and as Assistant Communications Officer. He has been in numerous engagements and has been under fire - heavy fire - at least three times.

He wants duty in Naval Aviation. If you are still taking people in from the reserve way, I suggest that you reconsider him.

Best to you,

R. W. BATES,
Captain, U.S.N.

Captain, L. K. RICE, U.S.N.,
Aviation Detail Officer,
Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department, Washington, D.C.

0624

5 December 1944.

Dear Admiral Kalbfus,

I have been wanting to write to you for a long time relative to my operations since last I saw you at Pearl but I have been so busy fighting, planning and studying reports that I simply haven't had time to write to anyone. I have heard indirectly from you, however, because of the announcement by the Secretary of the Navy that your job had been well done and that the Pearl Harbor affair was over. I, for one, am glad to hear it although I wonder how Admiral Kimmel feels. He may think that the public still holds him at fault!

I don't suppose that either you or I suspected that my trip out here to help Admiral Oldendorf would reach its climax in a fine naval victory but it did - the Battle of Surigao Strait. As a direct result of this victory Admiral Oldendorf has now been advanced to the rank of Vice Admiral which is as it should be. As for myself who helped plan the battle and, generally, as a good Chief of Staff should, closely supervised its developments, I don't expect to receive any particular recognition, nor should I. To have been present at the battle and to have had a hand in it is honor enough for one man.

I want you to note the lessons of the War College in this battle and the application of the Fundamental Military Principle in its entirety. Note (1) The chance of the correct physical objectives - the larger and more powerful enemy ships first and the effective action against them indicated by the destroyer attacks which slowed them down and helped destroy them and the gunfire of the heavy ships (2) The use of advantageous relative positions i.e. the relatively narrow strait, the destroyers ordered to operate along the banks to destroy enemy radar effect and create surprise; the crossing of the T for maximum gun effect, (3) The proper apportionment of fighting strength indicated by the various destroyer attacks in sufficient numbers to confuse the enemy's bridge control and fire control and thereby increase the chance of own torpedoes hitting and by the placing of the heavy ships in such position and such strength as to insure, not only the enemy's destruction, but also that none of his ships passed own forces and thereby got into the Gulf and attacked the shipping there and finally (4) Adequate freedom of action indicated by the location of own ships so that they were free to maneuver within certain limitations; there was plenty of searoom to the north of us. Had we attempted to go down the strait in the early phases of the battle this is one item that we would have definitely given up. The Japanese certainly did not have adequate freedom of action.

It is a lot of fun to fight a battle where you win so easily but you can readily visualize what could have happened had we used other tactics for example gone down the strait as I feel some impulsive commanders might have done. We might have been torpedoed -

0625

the Japs reportedly fired a lot of them at our destroyers - unsuccessfully fortunately - and Japanese gunfire might have done us damage. Also some Jap ships might have got through the strait with all that that implies. No, I think that the Fundamental Military Principle was successfully applied!

I was in the last two operations in this area and I wrote the Battle Action reports with especial reference to comments, all of which met with the approval of the Admiral so you can get an idea of what we are doing. In our last report we included a discussion of Decisions which was a vital matter to us. This was included to indicate the nature of the operations and the problems which plague the Commander.

I'm certainly glad I am out here, as I cannot but admit, that I like the forward areas - to be with the men who are doing the fighting - to be fighting yourself - to be using your brain, training and education against the enemy and to test your courage in the cauldron of war - that is the life. Whether I ever get any higher in this Navy or not I have this advantage; that I have been there where men are simply men, nothing else and where there are no values other than human values.

This war is getting tougher and this enemy of ours is fighting hard. He must not be overestimated - we have on several recent occasions tended to do just that - and we must expect unusual surprises although Kamikazi is not really new. It is its use in mass and quantity which is new.

It was nice to see you in Pearl when I did and I am deeply conscious of the honor you paid me by asking me to dinner and by other friendly notices. You know that I am very fond of both you and Mrs. Kalbfus and no day passes here but that I realize what the Navy owes you for your efforts in the advancement of mental power in war.

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas to you and yours, I am,

Very Sincerely Yours,

Admiral E. C. Kalbfus,
General Board,
Navy Department,
Washington, D.C.

0626

14 December 1944.

Dear J. B.,

I shall have to make this very short as time is fleeting and as you know our schedule you can readily imagine my haste.

The Admiral wrote you a letter the other day relative to fixing up your good ship for his staff. I cannot stress too strongly the importance of what the Admiral said. For example, my quarters on here are a state-room in the after part of the ship with twin bunks and no facilities otherwise. I think that it is essential that the Chief of Staff's quarters be representative of the Chief of Staff of a large force and that suitable office space, bedroom, and wash room be provided so that he can properly perform his functions.

I am having to work in the Admiral's cabin on here, which is unpleasant, not only for the Admiral but for me, and the Admiral has stressed, to me, his desire that my quarters in particular, be made suitably comfortable and suitable representative.

It is all very well for the constructors to holler about watertight integrity, and I strongly favor it; but victory in war is, in a large part, gained by suitable application of mental power on the part of the high command, and the staff rooms on this ship in no way contribute toward that.

The question of air cooling, which was mentioned in the Admiral's letter, is more important than I first thought and it is for the "heat" reason that most planning in this area is done up at Lake Sentani where it is cool.

I look forward to seeing your ship here very soon. I realize that you have several months of overhaul before you return but I can scarcely wait to get out of these makeshift quarters and into something more suitable. We count on you to bring out here a ship as new as possible.

Please obtain, for the use of Commander Battleship Squadron One, an electric mimeograph machine, a multigraph machine and two Underwood Typewriters, pica type, with twelve inch carriage.

I noticed with interest that Admiral Nimitz came aboard the Tennessee and gave a speech to the crew. That was fine and was well deserved. I note also, that from the way the press wrote up the action of the Battle of Surigao Strait, as reported by Captain Heffernan, the Tennessee practically won the battle. I don't blame you for being proud of your ship, but I must inform you that other ships have also claimed the same destructive effect, and we will have to divide up the glory so that it will be shared by all.

With best regards and best wishes for a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am, as ever,

Your old friend,

Rafe.

Captain J. B. Heffernan, U.S.N.
U.S.S. *Tennessee* (BB-43)
C/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

0627

27 January 1945.

Dear Herbie:

Some time ago - possibly a month ago - I took the liberty of accepting an offer from you to fix me up a snappy bracelet out of Japanese plane material so that I might wear my wrist watch in the Fleishhacker fashion. I therefore sent my wrist watch to you by special messenger and the rumor is that you finally received it.

Having done this I went to the wars. As you perhaps noted in the dispatches we had a hell of a time at first but gradually we overcame that dastardly weapon and took charge of the situation. Now everything is in hand so we are returning to our old fleet for duty but, because of the necessity for certain repairs, we may even return to your old home town. Remember?

So what I wanted to say to you was this. If you have finished with my design and haven't already done so, will you send it to me via air mail via this address. You see what has happened is, I'm not to retain this job. Nimitz, Oldendorf and others made strong representations to hold me but all to no avail - the big boss wants an aviator as chief of staff. This doesn't make sense for our outfit so far as we can see, but the big boss must have a suitable reason to overrule the whole Pacific so I abide by his judgement.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this job because it gave me a chance to use my training against the enemy. As you know our gang is always first there and must clear the way. That is what I like!

I certainly enjoyed my short stay with Admiral Reeves, for whom I not only have a high regard but also admiration for his abilities; with you, who are such a hell of a fine fellow, and with Titus Oates who keeps the pressure on all boilers so that the work gets done. Best to all of them and you.

If I get to the big city I will call your family to tell them about you.

Many thanks for your kindness and don't forget the little Japanese labels - oil here - or whatever they are that you have on your hand.

Very sincerely,

R.W. BATES.

Commander Herbert Fleishhacker, USNR,
Staff, Commander Navy No. 3252,
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

0628

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
FLEET AIR ALAMEDANaval Air Station,
Alameda, California,

25 February 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Lieutenant I. H. WADSWORTH, (W), USNR.
Headquarters Commander in Chief.

1. This is to inform you if you are interested and I believe that you are, that I arrived safely in California as per the arrangements you made, for which I am indeed grateful. The weather conditions as a whole were good and had not it been for a forced seven hour stop in Des Moines I should have said the trip was perfect. This seven hour delay in Des Moines caused me to miss flight 15 and forced me to take flight 17 which landed in San Francisco instead of Oakland and at an unearthly hour of approximately 0200 this morning. There were no rooms available in San Francisco, not even in the so-called officers dormitories and the St. Francis said they did not even have a cot. So there I was, with three bags, no place to sleep and at such an hour that assistance was unavailable as taxis are not allowed to go across the bridges. Fortunately there was a young lieutenant in the plane who had a car parked in the garage. We pulled it out and proceeded safely to Alameda. This proves conclusively that God helps those who help themselves, the young lieutenant, in this case, being clothed with some sort of divinity.
2. When I went down to the United Airlines station, I found all of my papers in order but no TR slip and I had to pay my transportation out of my own pocket. This was quite easy to do but everyone there seemed astonished that I did not have a TR slip. Your complete memorandum said nothing about a TR and not having traveled for several years, I knew nothing about it. Don't worry about it at all as it means nothing and I am mentioning it simply to advise that in the future should you sent anyone over commercial it is essential that they have a TR.
3. Please do something for me. CincPac authorized Vice Admiral Oldendorf to delay arriving in Pearl until 5 March. That message I think was in my desk but must have been confiscated by the Duty Officer as I do not have it here with me. I know that the Duty Officer took my papers out of my desk for safe keeping and returned them in the morning. Please send me a copy of this despatch immediately by return mail care of Commander Fleet Air, Alameda. I do not expect to leave here until at least 3 March and ample time should be available to receive this if you give it your immediate attention and mail upon receipt of this letter.
4. I cannot thank you too much for the kindness you displayed in looking out for my welfare. Everything, excepting the TR, was first rate. Please remember me most kindly to Captain Orem who was most helpful to me and was also most helpful to Vice Admiral Oldendorf. Also please thank your stenographic staff and especially Miss Stephens for their capable assistance.

0629

FILE

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
FLEET AIR ALAMEDA

5. The weather here is gloriously warm and wonderful after Washington.

6. I hope that you and your Army husband will soon be together again so that the merger you referred to may be considered complete.

R. W. BATES,
Captain, USN.
c/o ComFair, Alameda.

0630

WHERE THE CREDIT BELONGS

President Theodore Roosevelt said:

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

0631

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

5 April 1945.

Dear Admiral Oldendorf,

I sent a message to the Relief today and received a reply that your condition was ambulatory and that you were at Base 18, Guam. This, of course, was very gratifying to me because you know how I, and all of your staff, feel about you and how anxious we are that for the sake of yourself, your family, and your Nation you will soon be fully recovered and return to your duty. I hope that when this letter reaches you, you will be so well along in health, that you will be able to use your left arm as well as your right for toasting any and sundry, like any good two-fisted California drinking man should be able to do. That's what our pioneers used to say!

I am sending to you and, probably will continue to send to you, certain papers which I feel you should sign. I am signing most of the remaining papers, although I plan to give some to Admiral Deyo for his signature; as yet I have not done so. I hope that you won't feel that you are being smothered with confidential or secret papers, but I recollect that you suggested I do this while we were on the Relief, and I think that your name signed on some of these reports will give it a greater standing than anyone's else.

You will be interested to know that your recommendations to the Seventh Fleet concerning awards do not seem to be bearing fruit. Unless I am very much in error, Admiral Kinkaid and Admiral Van Hook agreed on Navy Crosses for ships which did well in the action at Surigao and further agreed that where the commanding officer of a ship was awarded a Navy Cross or other decoration, he might recommend a limited number of officers and men for awards, such as, the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, etc. A considerable number of citations are arriving now to be forwarded by you or delivered by you, if possible, and none are higher than the Bronze Star or Citation Ribbon. This includes cruisers. I am forwarding these to the admiral of the task unit or group or to whoever is nearby who might present them adequately.

As for myself, I came on board here and because of my condition have remained to a degree quiescent. Admiral Deyo's staff, as you know, he brought with him in toto from his cruiser flagship and except for me he has been using them almost entirely. The other day he sent for me and asked if I felt strong enough to take full charge. I said that I would although my shoulder was still sore, so I am now running the staff and trying to work in your staff as best I can for training as well as to take some of the load. Admiral Deyo has a pretty good staff and most of them are interested and quite anxious to do well. On the other hand, our staff members, that is the new staff members, are very green indeed and

0632

have not created a very favorable impression because of their lack of training. They are learning, however, and I think both Russell and Garland will work in very well. Sullivan seems to be working along favorably and, although at first he irritated the Admiral by suggesting he go to Guam, he now is well thought of. I have made Lieut. Duffy Flag Secretary again, as he was with you, on the suggestion, to my surprise, of the Admiral, and Duffy seems quite pleased. Lt. Comdr. Jackson, the air officer, is doing well and learning fast, as is Lt. Comdr. Bruning, the radar officer, and Lieut. Taylor, the ECM officer. Captain Cooper is, for the present, sitting on the side lines. Ensign Flynn is acting as signal officer and doing his usual fine job, but he is a little sunk because the first mail arrived on the ship the other day and only one member of the staff received any mail at all. Guess who that was? None other than me! It was a joke to everyone you may be sure.

Things have worked out very well so far and the operation, as you know, has been quite successful. I think WHPB did a very nice job and I think you would have thought so too. There are a great many ships here, and I have been quite impressed with it. I haven't compared it with our operations in the South but I do think down there we handled things much more rapidly than here. Our old friend that made things so troublesome for us in Luzon is flying around again but his quality is far below what he showed there. Even at that he has made his presence known, rather unfavorably, on occasions, and a number of our ships have been damaged.

The gentleman with whom you had the discussions by mail is handling things in his usual manner which some may approve of, and which some may not approve of but which, so long as he runs it, always succeeds admirably. I still retain the same idea concerning his method of operating that I did before, as I think that our methods of the South gave more freedom of action and initiative to commanders. However, I'm glad I'm here.

Admiral Deyo has been very kind and thoughtful about me and I have found my service interesting. I have had to draw up several Estimates of the Situation which were called for by Admiral Turner and I was delighted to find out how smoothly they worked out and how right they proved to be. Admiral Deyo is quite solicitous about you and seems quite sure that you will return soon, and, whereas I feel certain that he would like to retain this job, I feel that he is quite sincere in saying that you are entitled to have it and should be allowed to retain it, even though it took some time for you to recover. I like that very much because I feel exactly the same way. You have done the job for a year with remarkable success, and it would be a crime if anything were permitted to deprive you of the right to command or us to the right of your leadership.

I haven't heard a word about me. What I am trying to do is clear up all of the paper work here so that when my relief arrives, if he does, neither you nor Admiral Deyo will be forced to work in the dark.

0633

I cannot begin to tell you how much I miss you, not only for your leadership, which I always admired, but also for the privilege of the association which I shall always treasure. You are a hell of a fine fellow, if you will allow me to say so, and have the admiration and respect of everyone. So for that reason if for none other I say, "Shake a leg and get well."

With the warmest personal regards to yourself and to Lieut. Kelly who I know is looking out for you as a son, and with hopes for your speedy recovery, I am as ever

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

0634

5 April 1945

Mrs. J.B. Oldendorf,
701 - West Florence Avenue,
Downey, California.

Dear Betty,

I have been wanting to write to you for some time since the Boss and I collided with that buoy or whatever it was in the Advance Base where the Admiral's flagship was. I knew that you would be vitally interested once you heard of what had occurred, and so I am going to write and tell you a little about it from my viewpoint.

We had returned to the Base from our trip to the States and had stopped to say goodbye on one of the islands to Swede Overesch who was there. We had told the Island Commodore that we were reluctant to go back at night in the dark, because it was difficult to see and because there were usually loose pieces of wood etc. adrift. Also, the speedboat in use -- called a skimmer -- was so fast that it was really dangerous to ride in it at night. The Commodore asked that we have supper with him, and said that he would send us back in his skimmer with his own coxswain and his own Port Director, who knew everything about the harbor and therefore we would be safe.

We there fore accepted and left immediately after supper -- about 8:30 p.m. Within a matter of a few minutes we were both out. I was unconscious reportedly for about fifteen minutes and received a gash on my head about three inches long as well as a sprained shoulder and two ribs torn apart. The Admiral suffered the casualties which I know he has already related to you. We were taken aboard a hospital ship where we received very excellent attention and very careful x-ray diagnoses. My damage, although perhaps more painful than the Admirals, improved faster with the result that I begged to be allowed to go back to my ship and the Medical Staff agreed, if I went on the sick list. So I joined the Tennessee which is now my address and have been functioning as Chief of Staff ever since.

The Admiral, on the other hand, remained behind, much to my intense regret, and to the regret of everyone in the fleet. He was sitting up in a chair on the deck of the hospital ship at the

0635

time I left and seemed headed for health. He has now been transferred to a base hospital, No. 18, and the report I received from the hospital ship yesterday concerning him was, "Condition Ambulatory", which meant that he was walking around, and which I hope meant that he was much better.

At the time of the accident he was in considerable pain and I can see him now in the wrecked boat with a heavy gray tinge on his face. Ten days later, when I left the hospital ship, he was showing fine color and had his mind set on a speedy recovery. I do hope and expect that it won't be too long now before he is returned to duty. I do not expect to be here when he returns as the Department has never agreed, despite Admiral Nimitz, to allow me to remain, so I expect my relief any day, and from that time on, I don't know what the future holds in store. My shoulder is still sore and on occasions gives me great pain, which is reputed to be due to a nerve which is slowly healing. I might therefore decide to ask for a little rest if the thing doesn't improve faster than it has.

I want you to know how nice it was for me to accompany the Admiral to Washington and to have had the happy privilege of seeing you again. You are a perfectly swell person and I like not only you but also the devotion which I see exists so strongly in you for the Boss. I used to note the same thing in him all the time at sea and he was invariably thinking of you. He was quite wonderful. You are an enormous help to him and have been so for the many years you have been together.

I regret very much that I will not have the chance, perhaps, to serve further in this job but I can, at least, feel the deepest satisfaction in having enjoyed my service tremendously and in having had the good fortune of being with the Admiral through all of his later successes.

If I can supply you with any further information I will do so if I can but I must warn you that where I am now information is difficult to obtain on any subject. I suppose that you know where I am.

With best regards to you and to your entire family for whom I have a deep affection, I am as ever

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

0636

B

Personal File

9 April 1945

Captain L.C. Grannis, U.S.N.,
Office of the Commander in Chief,
Navy Department,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Grannis,

I have been wanting to write to you ever since I left Washington to thank you for your most understanding and friendly interest in me and my affairs. No one could have been more thoughtful than you were during my stay in Washington and I should hold myself forever ungrateful if I did not now sit down and acknowledge it. The reason for my delay in answering is that I never really reported on board the Tennessee until the night before the fleet departed from Ulithi. The reason for this was that Admiral O. and I were knocked out while riding in Commodore Kessing's boat, and we both ended up in the Hospital Ship. The whole affair was most unfortunate because it was but the last two miles of an otherwise very satisfactory eighteen thousand mile trip. We had warned Commodore Kessing that we did not like riding in a skimmer at night, even though it was but 2030, and we requested that he give us competent guidance. So, he gave us his coxswain and, in addition, his Port Director or, someone from that office who knew everything about the harbor and whom he guaranteed would bring us home safely. We had left the dock but a few minutes when we crashed. Reports have it that we ran into a new telephone buoy which had just been installed, but I am beginning to wonder if we might not have hit a Jap midget submarine. (X) Anyway, whatever it was, we were both knocked completely out, and I received a gash on my head about three inches long above the right temple as well as a sprained shoulder and Admiral O. cracked his collarbone and some ribs.

I was quite afraid that I would miss out on the next operation. Admiral Spruance came over to see me and said that he hoped that I could get back; that he wanted me in the operation as it was a serious one. Well, I wanted to get back also so I wrote a note to Admiral Deyo, who is temporarily, ComBatRonOne, and told him that I thought it was too bad that my experience should go to waste and that, even though disabled, I should like to return if I could. So, he came over to see me and the Hospital Ship then agreed that if I would ask to go that they would send me to sea on the sick list. So, I came over on the sick list and, although, I was not too valuable for the first few days I think, in recent days, I have been able to help considerably, particularly, on battle plans, on studies of the areas in which we should operate, and matters of that nature, as well as in running the Staff. Admiral Deyo has been quite complimentary, which is gratifying because I have not considered myself better than 75% efficient. However, each day I have improved, and I expect in the matter of a few days to be thoroughly myself.

0637

The present operation has been quite successful as you well know, although my old friend is back among us and creating some damage. He is not the clever fellow that we encountered at Lingayen but he is still dangerous because he comes in in considerable numbers and has persisted in so doing for some time. Naturally, I cannot discuss operations in this letter and I don't plan to do so, so we will have to drop this at this point.

I am sorry that I was unable to help you in Washington with U.S.F. 10A. I should have liked to do so because I have a definite interest in it but, unfortunately, my time there was so limited that I simply could not assist. I also enjoyed the party that you gave at the Army and Navy Country Club very much indeed. Your charming wife could not have been nicer to anyone then she was to me for which I give you thanks. I note that I have now been given a new assignment by BuPers and the orders have been received on board by dispatch. I don't know what it is all about as yet, but I feel quite confident that I shall enjoy the duty very much and I hope to be worthy of the trust placed in me. I can see considerable use for the ships of my prospective new command. I shall be detached from here presently when my relief arrives and when I report into Headquarters, Pacific, they will tell me more about it.

I have enjoyed my service in this command very much and I hope that while I functioned in the capacity of Chief of Staff I have contributed in some small way to the success of the war. Everyone has been most complimentary about what I seem to have accomplished. In the end, no one wants more than that.

I realize that the High Command has a most difficult time in choosing the officers to wear the stars and I frankly say that I had hoped and still hope that my name will come through that strainer one of these days!

Let me wish you the best of success in what you are doing! As you know, as I have told you before, we out here realize the difficulty of your work and the extraordinary success that you have had in doing it. There are very few people who have the background of the sea who seem to be able to write intelligently on the vital matters which you cover so simply. I know that Admiral Delany uses you with great satisfaction and were I in his shoes I should do likewise.

I enjoyed my stay in Washington immensely. I appreciated the deep interest of those in High Command over the situation out here and I was gratified at their readiness to listen to those of us who had the good fortune to have been here. As I view the present operation, and

0638

as I look back at what our report on Lingayen said, and what Admiral Oldendorf and I both said in Washington, I am more than ever satisfied that our estimates were correct. Even our suggestion that the Japanese might retire before our guns in forthcoming operations bore fruit in this case.

With best regards to yourself, to your beloved wife, and to those around you who are interested and, in particular to Admiral Delany, who seems to be an exceptionally capable officer, I am

Very Sincerely yours,

R.W.B.

0639

11 April 1945.

Admiral Edward C. Kalbfus,
General Board,
Navy Department,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Admiral,

I cannot begin to tell you what a great pleasure it was to me to see both you and Mrs. Kalbfus during my stay in Washington. You both were so nice to me and both were so much your usual charming selves that I enjoyed every moment that I had with you. I am particularly indebted to you that you allowed me to give the party for the Oldendorfs at the 1925 F. Street Club when you had already asked them. I am sorry that afterwards I held the floor so long. Very frankly, I did not desire to do so and I was trying my utmost to get someone to "take the ball." After you and Mrs. Kalbfus had left, I told Admiral Hustvedt and the others about my plan and they said that they knew that I was trying to get them to take over the conversation but they decided that they didn't want to do it in that they would let me do it all. I had planned to mention this matter to you before I left Washington but when I went to see you it slipped my mind.

I do not know whether you heard about what happened to Vice Admiral Oldendorf and me upon our return to the forward area. I presume that you may have heard something, but I want you to hear all about it as it is almost incredible.

We had arrived at Ulithi in the late afternoon, on the return from our 18,000 mile trip, and there we were met by the Commodore who asked us over on his island to see Swede Overesch, among others, as Swede was leaving. He had been detached. Night was coming on and we were reluctant to go back in the dark to our ship as there are many dangers in the water in these lagoons, such as boxes and other foreign matter. The Commodore told us that he would see that we got back safely, that he would lend us his own boat, his port director, and his own coxswain. So we went over, visited Swede, and had supper. Immediately after supper, at about 2030, we climbed into the Commodore's barge and shoved off. We had gone but a few moments when we hit something, now reported to be a new telephone buoy, and we were both knocked out. I understand that I was out about fifteen minutes, obtained a gash on my head about three inches long above the right temple which bled profusely, and sprung my shoulder, while Vice Admiral Oldendorf sustained a broken collar-bone and four broken ribs. We were promptly transferred to the hospital ship where we were taken care of very well indeed. I was frightened to death that I would not get in on this operation so I wrote a letter to the temporary Commander Battleship

0640

Squadron One - Admiral Oldendorf had been replaced temporarily because of his injuries - and asked if they wouldn't take me back even though a wreck. Meanwhile, Admiral Spruance came over to call and told me he wanted me back in my job if I could possibly get back. The Hospital Ship agreed to transfer me to duty on the sick list if I would volunteer. So I did and I came aboard and here I am.

I am glad to say that I am gradually improving and I hope that it won't be very long before I am fully recovered.

I haven't seen or heard from Vice Admiral Oldendorf since I left the Hospital Ship and I certainly hope that he recovers soon and will rejoin his command. He is a very fine man and I have a deep affection for him. I suppose that this is partially due to the fact that he asked for me by name and signal number from Admiral Nimitz to be his Chief of Staff and then refused to give me up, even though CinCPac orders directed that I be returned to Pearl very soon. I have now been performing this function for seven months which is far from a short time. I regret to say, in some ways, that I am losing this job now, because an aviator is coming here to relieve me and should be here almost anytime. I say almost, because I have been given a new job in the Pacific - I am to be the Commander of the PT Boats Pacific, which is a task and type commander. I certainly don't feel that I know a great deal about PT boats but I have been in both destroyers and gunboats, and the modern PT boat is a combination of both of them with modern weapons. I have also had the War College education, which helps. I should have a very interesting and thoroughly important time in this work. What it will amount to in size and scope I do not know, but I will find out soon enough, I guess.

I am now in a new operation, as you know, which to date has been quite successful. I was somewhat disappointed when the YAMATO was sunk because I had always counted on sinking her with the Bombardment and Fire Support Group. However, the airmen did the job most effectively and, in the end, it doesn't make much difference who sinks these ships so long as they are sunk. I will be glad when the whole Japanese Navy is calling on Davy Jones.

There isn't anything new to report that you don't already know excepting information that I cannot release over this paper. However, I can release this, that we have had the pleasure of having here, as the staff guest, none other than your competent historian, Commander Sam Morrison. He certainly is a hard working and interesting gentleman and is always seeking information so that your history may reflect the truth. All of us like him very much. I suppose you will be seeing him one of these days.

I want to say again that I appreciate very thoroughly the friendship that both you and Mrs. Kalbfus have held for me over these years, and I, once again, must say how nice it was to be able to see you as much as I did. I hope that you will remember me most kindly to anyone interested and particularly to Admirals Hepburn and Snyder, whose qualities I shall ever admire. Thank you for everything!

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

0642

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

19 April 1945.

Vice Admiral J.B. Oldendorf,
Base Hospital No. 18, Guam.

Dear Admiral,

We have all been waiting for some time around here to hear the good news that you were well and would soon return. The reason for this is that there are still a good many matters which are up in the air which cannot be settled unless you either return or send word that you will not return and a new Commander will then be appointed.

Everyone here believes thoroughly that you will soon be with them and is sincerely hoping for your thorough and complete recovery.

Admiral Deyo is anxious to know whether you will return and if so when, because we have these two staffs mixed up here, and he would like to know what to do about them. He called me in yesterday, and has done so for the past few days suggesting that Captain Cooper be detached. I told him that I realized that Captain Cooper was not trained for the job of Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations), and that you had not requested him but that the Department had sent him. Admiral Deyo said that he didn't think that you would like to have a Chief of Staff not properly trained and that whether he stayed or you came back, he thought Captain Cooper should be assigned to duties more in line with his capabilities. I am therefore drawing up a dispatch which I think will clear up that matter, although I do not know whether Commander Donaho who has been nominated by Admiral Lockwood and whom we have accepted, will be able to do the job either. It might be well for you to look into this.

Captain Cooper is quite upset about the whole situation and has talked to me quite frequently about it. He thinks that he would have learned in time and I have no doubt but that he would. He knows that he is not satisfactory to Admiral Deyo, and has even suggested that he might put in a request for detachment himself. The other members of your Staff are as you probably recollect mixed up a little bit in the fleet. Major McKennan has been with Admiral McCormick but he has returned on board. Lieutenant Commander Wood, your Communication Officer, is still with Admiral McCormick as is Lieutenant Cassidy. Lieutenant (jg) Jones and Shamplain, who are CWO officers, were loaned to Commander FIFTH Fleet and now we cannot get them back, at least for the present.

0643

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

I wish to comment a little further now upon your Staff as I see it. (a) Captain Cooper, we have already commented on. (b) Commander Garland: Commander Garland is doing well. He is hardworking, conscientious, thoroughly loyal. He has a heavy job and is slowly learning it. (c) Commander Russell: Commander Russell is not the Gunnery Officer that I had hoped he might be. He is inclined to be haphazard, and to lack thoroughness. It may be solely due to rapid advancement with a lack of experience in this type of work but as yet I haven't decided. I have been putting the pressure on him a little bit, and it is my hope that he will profit. (d) Lieutenant Commander Jackson: Lieutenant Commander Jackson is doing quite well, knows his air thoroughly and works hard at it. He and Russell and Garland are being qualified as Watch Standers, and I think likewise Lieutenant Commander Bruning will be qualified. Lieutenant Commander Jackson has indicated to me that now that the Chief of Staff is to be a Airman there will be no need of him and he wants to be detached back to torpedo planes. So far I have laughed at him. (e) Lieutenant Commander Bruning: Lieutenant Commander Bruning is the Radar Officer and is quite a capable fellow. He is a little bit sensitive, and the Admiral has upset him a couple of times, but I seem to have smoothed that out now, at least so he says. (f) Lieutenant Taylor: Lieutenant Taylor, the RCM Officer, is doing well and learning seagoing practices rapidly. We got a night attack the other night and by means of maneuvering and jamming we succeeded in making it fail, although some of the torpedoes exploded nearby. We got a nice message about it from Commander FIFTH Fleet; Lieutenant Taylor was, in part, responsible.

Admiral Deyo brought with him ten officers. These he is using almost entirely to operate the squadron. He uses me a great deal and Commander Garland somewhat, but the remainder of the staff are in unimportant assignments.

I suppose that you know that I have been detached and assigned as a Type and Operating Commander in the Pacific. I am to relieve Commodore Moran, I guess, but as Moran, although he had the title, only operated in the Solomons I do not think the jobs are anyway near identical. I hear that this is going to be a big job but I don't know. I only hope so.

Captain Van Deurs has been designated as my relief and ordered to report here but when he will come seems doubtful. The situation here has not as yet fully stabilized, so I don't know what the picture regarding Van Deurs is.

0644

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

I do hope that you are in sufficiently healthy shape to be able to write me a note, or to have Kelley write me a note, giving me the latest news. This is important, because I am sending to you a considerable amount of Secret correspondence for your signature, and I would hate to have it running all over the countryside.

I have a lot to say to you when I see you! Until then, with warmest personal regards to you I am, as ever,

Yours sincerely,

R. W. BATES.

0645

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

19 April 1945

Captain Harry Slocum,
USS MINNEAPOLIS (CA 36),
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

Dear Harry,

I am sending you this letter with the hope that you will see fit to take some time off before you are detached to put in a request that the Minneapolis be awarded at least a Navy Unit Citation. I am enclosing here a draft sent to me from an officer in ComCruPac about the action the Minneapolis was in. It is not complete and requires many additions from you, because of your service in her.

I would suggest that you start right out with an official request and discuss the reasons why you feel that the Minneapolis is entitled to a citation. The Pennsylvania has put in for such a citation and it has already been forwarded, recommending approval. The Pennsylvania is now under overhaul at Hunter's Point, San Francisco and I think that if you will get hold of their write-up for themselves, you will get an idea of a nice way of presenting our good ship.

One thing that the Pennsylvania did was to take the despatches which were sent to her during these operations to point out her successes.

I don't think that any ship in the whole Navy merits in any way the recognition that the Minneapolis merits. She was in there at the beginning and she is still in there. The fact that she has not been hit recently, in my mind is a indication that the enemy realize the fine training of the Minneapolis and refrain from closing her too closely. You may have noticed that ships which go to the Navy Yard for battle damage are almost always rehit upon arriving in the battle area. This is because the enemy, I think, recognizes our ships and notices new faces. As an example take the Maryland, and the Franklin, and the Newcomb.

I cannot begin to tell you with what pride and also with what sorrow I noticed the Minneapolis leave for home. I felt pride because I am fond of her and her excellent performance since she came out of the Navy Yard September 1943. She made an enviable reputation for herself under my command; she has done equally under your command. I know that we are both proud of her. I was sorry to see her go, because I miss my old friend already around here. I have always felt that when the Minneapolis got a job to do she would do it, and we could count on her. However, if any ship is entitled to rest it is she. By the time she gets into the Navy Yard she will have been out

0646

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

of the States nineteen months which is long enough for any ship in this type of warfare. Please wish everybody on the ship a very happy holiday time and a good overhaul while at the Navy Yard.

I want to congratulate you upon your fine Command. I know that you enjoyed it, and I know that your ship enjoyed you. I hope that the selection board in Washington gives you your just share of recognition.

I suppose you heard of my new job. I am to be in command of Motor Torpedo Boats, Pacific. I don't know what this is exactly, but it can be very important and very interesting. I am quite pleased to have a good job. My relief has not as yet arrived out here, so I am still the Chief of Staff of BatRon ONE. I have liked the job and I suppose the best proof of that is the fact that I reported on board on the sick list from the Hospital Ship with a sprained shoulder and a cracked head solely to be in the present operation, and to be of help to Admiral Deyo who asked me to come back if I could, as did Admiral Spruance. With best regards, and best wishes to my friends of the Minne and particularly to Miller and Vestal who wrote me sick notes, I am,

Your old friend,

R. W. BATES.

0647

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

20 April 1945.

Vice Admiral R.C. GIFFIN, U.S. Navy,
Headquarters Sea Frontier, Navy No. 116,
c/o Fleet Post Office, New York, N.Y.

Dear Tom,

As one of your old boys I cannot begin to tell you how pleased I was to find that you were still thinking of your Alley Cats and looking out for their welfare. To be Chief of Staff in the Caribbean area would be a very nice assignment and I am more than gratified to you for thinking of me. When I arrived in Washington recently I saw Howard Orem and he told me that I had been slated to go with you but that Admiral Nimitz had blocked it, saying that I was not to be removed from the Pacific. This was news to me but it fitted in with my wishes in this war, as I think you well know. I want to stay in the Combat Area as long as I can.

I am at present Chief of Staff to BatRon ONE which is temporarily commanded by Admiral Deyo because Admiral Oldendorf has been hospitalized for about two months.

What happened was this: After the Lingayen Operation, which was so successful, Admiral Nimitz sent Admiral Oldendorf and me to duty in Washington for one month to give them all the latest information. We left about the end of January and, arriving on the West Coast, remained for a few days on leave and then went to Washington in a Flag plane. Mrs. Oldendorf accompanied us in the Navy plane. Upon arrival in Washington, we remained for about two weeks and explained modern warfare as viewed from the angle of a Commander of the Bombardment and Fire Support Group. Actually, we ran not only the Fire Support but the Escort Carriers, the Underwater Teams and the Mine Sweepers.

We received a very heartening welcome in Washington and I found everyone very interested and anxious to learn the news. Needless to say, I was very impressed and very happy to see the alertness everywhere around CominCh.

We left Washington near the end of February and returned to the Forward Area, arriving early one evening in the harbor where our Flagship was. We got in Scrappy Kessing's speedboat, the boat promptly hit a buoy or a midget submarine, or something, and both Admiral Oldendorf and I were knocked out. The Admiral broke some ribs and his collarbone while I cracked my head, with a cut about three inches long above the temple, and I suffered a sprained shoulder. We were taken to the Hospital Ship where I remained ten days. Admiral Spruance visited me and asked me if I could return to help out, and Admiral Deyo came over and asked me to help him, so I asked the Hospital Ship if I could go, even though a wreck. They said I could if I asked to go of my own volition. So I came over here to the Flagship and I have been

0648

very much in the present operation. I am just about well now, although I feel on occasions that I am not as yet quite the fellow I was before I was hit.

The warfare in these areas has changed considerably from what we experienced in our day. It is rough and tough but I love it and I face my prospective detachment with sincere regret. Admiral King refused to permit me to stay here even though Admiral Nimitz and Vice Admirals McMorris and Oldendorf insisted that I remain, as, I think, did Vice Admiral Wilkinson. Admiral King was adamant that there must be an airman in this job.

I have recently received my orders, which make me Commander Torpedo Boats, Pacific. It is an independent assignment and can be highly important. When Mike Moran had it, it was only in the Solomons but, if my understanding is true, there are rumors that it will embrace the entire Pacific including the Seventh Fleet. I certainly hope that this is so. Frankly I know nothing about it, nor what is scheduled for me in it, but the above may mean something.

I hope that this letter finds you in excellent health and that they have finally allowed Mrs. Giffin to join you down there. I think that it is a crime that you should have to remain separated for so many years when it is not necessary. You are a hell of a fine fellow, a most wonderful Naval Officer and Admiral and I think it is only right that after your many years of outstanding service, you should be recognized in this small matter.

I don't think that I am going to be a Rear Admiral, at least now. I have received strong recommendations from as high as Admiral Nimitz but somebody in King's office is blocking me. At least, I was so told while in Washington. It seems strange to me, though, that a five star Admiral is unable to obtain the Flag Officers he wishes.

Let me hear from you from time to time as you are a friend one never wants to lose. Heaven only knows you have certainly been kind and considerate to me and I am deeply grateful. With warmest personal regards to you and to Sheeley, whom, I presume is still activating the local society, I am, as ever,

One of your old Alley Cats,

R. W. BATES.

0649

22 April 1945.

Dear Jocelyn,

I am in receipt of two or three letters from you for which I say thanks. It is nice of you to think of me as often as you do and I am particularly happy to hear news, not only of my own family, but also of yours.

I was quite pleased to note that your son-in-law was awarded the Air Medal for his fighting in Italy and I am more than pleased that he is in command of the outfit he is in now. He has trained for many years and should have the sober balance which is necessary in a good commander. There is a great tendency in Air to advance men far beyond their capabilities and then place them in command of others whom they are not fitted to command. I saw a considerable amount of this, even up to brigadier general, in the Army Air in this area. The awarding of a medal is supposed to be for meritorious service or for valor, but advancement in rank is supposed to be for increased capabilities. I am not one of those who believe that because a man managed to drop a bomb on an island, he therefore becomes suitable for advancement. I, on the other hand, believe in the brain and in its use; it's proper use. To know enough to use the brain adequately, usually takes a little time, even for the best. So I have no doubt, that Mac's group are glad to have him in command, in view of his long experience as a teacher.

I was also interested to hear about young Dick. There is no doubt but that those young fellows working out of Morotai may find the going a little tough, but the Japanese opposition they are meeting is low, so they can be glad that they are where they are, particularly, during their early days of combat flying. I will write him a letter in a day or so to boost his morale.

I was quite distressed to hear that Nion Tucker's son had been wounded at Iwo. When I talked to Nion at his office in San Francisco, I felt that he had a strong hunch that his son would not come out whole. He could not have failed to have had that hunch with the press and the public acting the way they were over the losses there. However, he never gave one sign to me of his fear and I must say that I admire him for it. His son must be a chip off the old block. I hope that the young man is not seriously wounded and that, with a little care and recreation, he will be restored to the Marines where I know he wants to be. These Marines are a courageous lot and all those who join-up are almost certain to meet the enemy face to face. When a young man, knowing that, joins-up with the Marines, he can't fail to have "guts."

I am enclosing in this envelope a statement from the Disbursing Officer concerning my Naval income for the last year. The figure that I had given you is approximately correct. I want to thank you, at this time, for having made out my income tax and looked out for me as well as you have. It is nice to think that one has a reliable fellow watching over his affairs at home.

I suppose, from the press, that you can guess where I am, but I am not able to say as yet, because it has not been released. I would like to say

0650

that I enjoy what I am doing, even though I am not yet fully recovered from my accident. The wound in my head has healed quite well and so has my shoulder, although on occasions, I am suddenly reminded of it by some sharp pain which had slipped up on me unawares. I am going to be relieved presently, much to my regret, and will be reassigned to a new job in the Pacific; one which I will not mention until I have been detached from here. Possibly you know of it already. If you do, I can say that I expect to enjoy it.

I hope that you will remember me most kindly to the gang in your office, to Mr. French, to all of your immediate family, and to my family when you call.

With many thanks for everything you have done for me, I am as ever,

Your loving brother,

Dick.

Mr. H. J. Bates,
2756 10th. Avenue,
Sacramento, California.

0651

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

23 April 1945.

My dear Tucker,

I was quite concerned, the other day, when I received a letter from my brother, Jocelyn (Tiny), in which he informed me that your son, Nion, a Lieutenant in the Marines, had been wounded at Iwo. I am taking this opportunity to express to you my sincere regret that he should have been one of those wounded, and a hope that he will have a speedy and complete recovery.

I remember that we were talking about Iwo just about the time he must have been hit, and I remember, further, that your attitude indicated great courage. You never, at any time, expressed any fear over his welfare, nor would you indicate in any way that you were concerned over him. Of course you were concerned and I knew it; but you had that restraint and self-control that so few have which keeps your troubles and your tribulations, real or feared, within your own soul. I think that your son would have been proud of you.

I know that you and Mrs. Tucker are very proud of your son. He has to be a fine man to be with the Marines. We only have a few divisions of them in the Pacific and they are steadily fighting somewhere. Their casualty lists are high, and yet numbers of young men flock to enlist with them. This Marine Corps of ours is a gallant outfit and I know your son, being one of them, is gallant also.

May I convey to you and to Mrs. Tucker my belief and hope that he will soon be well. It was nice to have seen you in San Francisco, and I appreciated the chance to say "hello."

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. BATES.

Mr. Nion Tucker,
Elworthy and Company,
111 Sutter Street,
San Francisco, California.

0652

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

26 April 1945.

Dear Old Bill,

I want you to know that I sympathize with you most heartily upon your misfortune to have been so damn good in the Bureau of Naval Personnel, that they found it necessary to return you there to relieve Denfeld. I also sympathize with the boys in the 7th Fleet, because, when I was there, it was the general opinion that you and Berkeley were, by far, the two outstanding Rear Admirals in that whole area, and I am afraid that they will miss you in future operations.

I know that your new assignment, as Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel, is an extremely important one, as it affects the morale of the entire Navy. When material fails, it can be readily repaired as a general thing, but when morale fails, it is difficult to restore it. The morale of the Fleet is high, and will be, no matter what happens at present, but as the war nears an end, I am afraid that there may be difficulties along that line throughout the entire military establishment.

So, although I feel that you are needed out in the Fleet, it may be that you are needed even more where you are.

We here, feel that it is not an easy assignment, but we know that that won't faze you in the least. Best regards as always.

Your old friend,

R. W. BATES.

Rear Admiral William M. Fochteler,
Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Arlington, Virginia.

0653

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

26 April 1945.

Dear Tom,

The question of PT boat armament is coming up again so I have tried here to obtain from others some ideas on what the armament should consist of. I went over to see Vice Admiral Turner this morning on this subject, and he was very kind and talked to me for sometime, not only on the subject of armament, but on PT boats in general. He gave me permission to quote him, so I plan to do so now.

He said that he saw no uses for PT boats in amphibious operations because he thought that he had other ships that could accomplish the work equally well, and because he felt, further, that PT boats were not reliable as regards recognition. He is of the belief that they can do a good job when no American Men of War are around. He thinks that they are useful for certain limited uses, such as, in defense of some of the smaller bases, and for what might be termed "night gunboat duty." He is not impressed with the use of rockets which I suggested to him, because he thinks that they are hard to handle and generally inaccurate against a moving target, although, they might be useful against bombardments of shore objectives at night. I think that he believes that the 40 mm. is a good weapon, provided the uses to which the ship is put permit its use and provided, further, that the enemy armament is not much greater. He pointed out that in the South Pacific the PT boats had had a difficult time because the combination of Japanese destroyers and night fighters had made it tough for them. He thinks that they operate better from the shore establishments than they do from the floating establishments, but in stressing this, he indicated that the shore establishment becomes quite an undertaking. He believes, and I think this belief is shared by most, that the shore establishment should precede the PT boat. The PT boats need much repair, particularly engine repair, and they must have all these facilities available before they are moved in.

I am writing this to you because I thought it might be helpful in assisting you towards making a suitable representation to the Chief of Naval Operations on the subject of PT boats. My attitude towards the armament is along the lines of the despatches which we sent you from Commander Battleship Squadron One, but even that is not adequate. I think that the armament of a PT boat, or any other special type ship, should be based upon the prospective operations. In other words, what is the contemplated use of the PT boats in this Pacific area in the future? Are they to be used as gunboats to interfere with the Japanese communications among these islands, or along the Chinese mainland should we go there; or are they to be used offensively against smaller

0654

units of the Japanese fleet; or are they going to be used in defensive work around these various islands? It should be evident that the equipment in each case might be radically different. So, if I may suggest it, I must repeat that no suitable recommendation concerning their armament can properly be made without a knowledge of their contemplated uses.

I saw Captain Eller on board here, and we took him to sea with us so that he might see action against the enemy, but the aviators interfered and sank our targets so that the so called OBB's lost the chance of sinking Japan's YAMATO. The Battle Order was designed to indicate that we were seeking the YAMATO with the project of "murder" in view. I hope that you got that idea!

With warmest regards to you, and hopes that I will see you in a few days in your office, I am, as ever,

Your old friend,

R. W. BATES.

Captain Tom B. Hill,
Staff, Commander in Chief,
U. S. Pacific Fleet,
Advance Headquarters,
Navy #926 (NINE TWO SIX).

0655